

So far as the Communist authorities are concerned, the actual wedding act should consist merely of a registration in the local office of the ZAGS (*Zapis' aktov grazhdanskogo sostoianiia* — Registry of Civil Acts); any festivities connected with it should preferably be organized by the local Young Communist League, Trade Union, or other organization to which the young couple belongs. In fact, however, the natives prefer to celebrate weddings in a more traditional manner. Among the inhabitants of the steppe and desert, for instance, it is still customary on the wedding day for the bride (properly veiled) to wait at her parents' home for the friends of the bridegroom to take her to her new home — but whereas before the Revolution she was transported on a camel or a horse, she is now brought to the wedding place in a rented automobile. It is still customary, while the wedding party is in progress, for the young pair to retire to a separate room, and there have sexual relations, in order to be able to prove to the relatives of both parties the virginity of the bride. The entire wedding ceremony in Central Asia assumes ever more the character of a purely secular festivity, but insofar as possible it is carried out within the framework of traditional nonreligious forms and rituals.

The food habits of the natives seem to have undergone little change. Through contact with Russians they have been exposed to such novel foods as potatoes, bread, and boiled eggs, but their preference is for traditional native dishes: pilau, kumys, etc. They are often compelled to eat Russian food, including pork, in government and other restaurants and in the army, but they avoid it if at all possible. The natives seem to prefer to partake of their main meal in the evening, rather than at midday, as the Russians are in the habit of doing.

In clothing the natives of Central Asia appear to tend in the direction of a synthesis of traditional and Western garb. The basic articles of wear, their cut, and ornamentation are native; but some items of clothing are adopted from the Russians. Adult males have almost everywhere taken to wearing leather shoes, which are superior in comfort and durability to their native counterparts; Muslim girls like to wear, together with their national costumes, Western-style blouses. Soviet sources report a general tendency on the part of natives to wear mixed clothing, part Western, part native — the former apparently for comfort, the latter for national identification. In the cities, especially among the youth, Western clothing predominates; in the village, the opposite is the case. In clothes, as in other customs, the principle enunciated earlier holds true: the natives discard what is patently inconvenient and adopt from the Russians what is more practical, i.e., Western. They do not discard traditions for reasons other than utility.

age of adolescence; the local press even reports occasionally instances of high-school graduating classes being completely devoid of girls, all of them having dropped out a few years earlier. See *Central Asian Review*, vol. 1, no. 3 (1953), pp. 47-53; vol. 2, no. 1 (1954), pp. 71-72.